

Dear Mothers' Union members and friends,

We are still in a time of waiting... even though some of our freedoms have been restored to us as the infection and death rates of Covid19 continue to fall. Thank God! However, many of us are still afraid to step outside our "bubble" and re-engage with our community. We are waiting to feel safe and we should not be too anxious about overcoming these challenges. As always, the Bible has some thoughts on this, in the wonderful book of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. Those of us who remember the songwriter Pete Seeger know he used these words for his song "Turn Turn Turn" ... made famous by *The Seekers* ...

For everything there is season and a time for every matter under heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die...

A time to break down and a time to build up...

A time to weep and a time to laugh...

A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing.

Doesn't that sum up what we have been through? Maybe, 2020 has been the time to have a worldwide pandemic! But now we are in the time to build up, our families, community, parish and society. What a challenge that is going to be!

As we rapidly move towards the end of our liturgical year, we enter into another time of waiting... Advent the season, which anticipates Christmas. I think this year we will all greet Christmas with relief that our lives are returning to normal and that we can gather with our families at home to celebrate. During Advent, I encourage each and every one of you to decorate your houses or front door or garden for Christmas and to ensure that you celebrate this coming festival with great joy and happiness. A Christmas wreath or lighting Advent candles is a quiet witness to a coming Christian celebration. Advent will be a much quieter time of reflection and preparation, if we ignore the commercial carols and ringing of cash registers. After all Christmas is a celebration of the community of Christians, not of department stores and supermarkets. Advent is our sign from God, to look for the sign and respond to the birth of Jesus.

Love and peace, Irene

God of the Front Door

Michael McGirr, the writer, teacher, poet and former priest whose prayers "*Trees Without Masks*" have featured on our parish pew sheet for some weeks, has just released a new book of prayers for Christmas and Advent in this year of the Corona Virus... *Doorways into Hope and Joy*. He mentions that many of us remember Advent Calendars, where our patient waiting for Christmas was rewarded each day by chocolate or some other treat. He has chosen doors of a different kind. Here is a prayer for the first day of Advent.

God of the Front Door

Loving God, as we step out into the world today

As we do every day.

Sometimes it is easy to leave the comfort of home, sometimes it isn't, but mostly we rush out on autopilot because we are running late.

Beyond this door there are many things we can't control, situations we can't predict and events whose pace frustrates us.

Give us the peace of heart and strength of purpose

That allow us to step out and find our home with you

Wherever your grace leads us today.

Help us this day to be the answer to somebody else's prayer.
AMEN.

MU Afternoon Tea Monday Nov. 30th 2pm. Jells Park

- Where? Meet near Carpark 5 in the area where a shelter shed is shown. Attached to this emailed newsletter is a map of Jells Park, kindly drawn by Marg Tingate.
- What to bring? A folding chair or rug as you prefer. We will be doing a lot of sitting and talking.
- Food and Drink? We don't know whether the Visitors Café will be open or not, so bring your choice of food and drink.
- Christmas Hamper gift? We are supporting the parish collection of food for those in need at Christmas. Biscuits or sweets (not chocolate because of the heat), tins of ham, salmon, tuna etc, dried fruit & nuts or tinned fruit, basic food items welcome too.
- For Sale? Phoebe will have homemade jams, chutney, sauce etc for sale. These make very healthy Christmas presents.
- Interested in Irises? Phoebe will be taking orders for mixed bags of Irises... ten bulbs for \$10. She is generously donating this money to support our MU Parenting Program in PNG.
- Optional extras? An umbrella, camera, walking shoes, sun hat, blanket etc. as long as you can carry these!

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I ASKED GOD TO SEND ME A SIGN AND NOW I
DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT